

Montana and the sky



Department of Transportation - Aeronautics Division

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Aeronautics Division Loan/Grant Program

The Montana Pilots Association introduced for legislative action at the 1993 session a bill for a tax on aviation fuel sold in Montana. The bill as passed mandated that this income be used in the establishment of a loan and grant program to financially assist airport sponsors with airport improvement and development projects. Additionally, these funds may be used for the promotion of aeronautical purposes throughout the state, such as purchasing NDBs, pilot weather briefing centers and other aeronautical equipment.

Collection of this income began August 1993. Close to our projections, each cent generates approximately \$85,000 for grants and \$85,000 available for loans on an annual basis. Every dollar in each fund is

available back to airport sponsors as a grant and/or loan with no monies used for administrative purposes.

The Montana Aeronautics Board sent out in early February an Aeronautics Division Loan and Grant Application package to all airport sponsors. Although the collection of these monies had not built a full year of funding, it was felt important that the process of loan/grant distributions begin in anticipation of this year's construction season.

The Montana Aeronautics Board met in Helena on April 22 to consider all applications for airport aid received for this years season. As expected, there was intense competition for Aeronautics limited funds available for grants and loans. Requests are screened according to a priority system to

ensure their proper distribution. Unfortunately, not every request for financial assistance can be met. Even those requests that were approved, many were funded at much less dollar amounts than the sponsor requested.

The Montana Aeronautics Board and the Aeronautics Division is now pleased to announce tentative approval of the following list of airport sponsors for loans and grants, this first year of the program. These funds are subject to certain contingencies.

Airport sponsors will receive another loan/grant Airport Aid Application in November of this year with instructions and policy information regarding these fund distributions for the next cycle in 1995.

Glendive-Dawson Community Airport

Grant: \$4,375

Project: modify perimeter fencing and safety area work to runway 12.

Havre City-County Airport

Loan: \$27,408

Project: rehabilitate apron and taxiways A, B & C, porous friction course (PFC) runway 3/21, electrical work, drain North Halfway Lake and runway 25 safety area work.

Malta Airport

Grant: \$4,000

Project: Master Plan Study

Plains Airport

Grant: \$2,500

Project: LIRL system for runway 12/30.

Red Lodge Airport

Loan: \$9,496

Project: chip seal runway 16/34, taxiway and apron area

Stevensville Airport

Loan: \$8,071

Project: construct hangar access taxiway, partial parallel taxiway and apron extension. Also, Airport Layout Plan update.

Thompson Falls

Grant: \$1,500

Project: Airport Layout Plan and Mini-Master Plan Update.

Wolf Point - L.M. Clayton Airport

Loan: \$40,025

Grant: \$27,650

Project: PFC runway 10/28, reconstruct apron, relocate partial parallel taxiway, new MIRL lights.

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Administrator's Column

Loran C Funding May Be In Jeopardy: There are rumors that the U.S. Coast Guard may be proposing to get the Loran C and Omega off their budget and if successful the funding of the program would have to come from another Department of Transportation agency or contract it out to the private sector to operate. It is reported that 1996 was to be a review date and that both Loran C and Omega are supposed to be around until 2005 with a 10 year phaseout after that. However, according to Phil Boyer, President, AOPA, the Coast Guard has recommended that Loran C stations will be turned off after 1996. Boyer voiced concern over 120,000 or more general aviation aircraft equipped with Loran C.



FCC Proposes Radio License Fee Increase: The Federal Communications Commission is proposing to increase the current aircraft radio license fee of \$35 up to \$115. The current and proposed fee is for a period of 10 years and the proposed increase will add \$10 plus a \$7 annual user fee bringing the total to \$115. AOPA has stated that "this price increase for an aircraft radio station license is outrageous" and "boarders on extortion". The FCC justifies their proposed fee increase by basing it upon a 1993 law requiring government agencies to recover policy and rulemaking costs. The new fee does not apply to government operations, amateur (ham) radio or nonprofit organizations. The FCC aircraft radio license is not transferable and the AOPA stated that the average general aviation aircraft is sold every four years and that the FCC should refund for the years remaining. AOPA also stated that "there is no absolute regulatory need for this fee and elimination of this unnecessary economic burden on general aviation would be a good start to government downsizing."



Montana FAA Control Towers Not Targeted For Cut: The FAA plans to contract out 25 more Air Traffic Control Towers this year bringing the total of "contract towers" to 55. The effected towers currently operate from 12 to 16 hours daily with fewer than 35 operations per hour and employ about 200 federal employees. The FAA people employed at these 25 towers will be offered jobs at other facilities or be offered jobs with the private contractor.



General Aviation Safety Records Continue To Improve: According to the National Safety Board the 1993 general aviation safety record was their best in 30 years. According to the AOPA Air Safety Foundation the 1993 general aviation fatal accidents were the lowest since 1958. There were 385 fatal accidents last year compared to 447 in 1992 which is a drop of 13.8 percent. Total accidents were also down with 2,022 in 1993 compared to 2,074 in 1992. The NTSB reported a total of 715 fatalities in 1993 compared to 862 in 1992 which is a drop of 17 percent.



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Soaring Flight Scholarship

The Soaring Society of America, Inc., is offering a soaring flight scholarship to contestants between the ages of 14 and 22. No flying experience is needed...only interest and desire.

The scholarship entitles the winner to \$600 worth of sailplane flying lessons.

To enter submit an essay on some aspect of "soaring flight", with a form available only at US soaring sites. For a list of active sites near you, contact: The Soaring Society of America, Inc., P.O. Box E, Hobbs, NM 88241-1308 or call (505) 392-1177 or (800) I-CAN-FLY. Entry deadline is June 30, 1994.

15 Meter National Preparation Underway

The 1994 U.S. National 15 Meter Soaring Contest will take place at the Mission Field airport in Livingston starting July 26 and continuing through August 4 (practice days are scheduled for July 24 and 25). The competition will have 48 of the nation's top soaring pilots flying some of the world's highest performance sailplanes. The winner will become a member of the U.S. Soaring Team competing in the International Soaring Championships in New Zealand in 1995.

The National contest at Livingston is the result of several years of planning by local soaring enthusiasts. Because of the varied terrain and excellent summer weather, Montana is believed to have some of the most exciting soaring conditions in the country.

The National meet is being sponsored by the Montana Aeronautics Division and '94 Montana Soaring Nationals LLC. Interested parties are invited to volunteer to assist in the operation of this significant event. Further information can be obtained by calling Eric Finke at 449-6502, Greg Mecklenberg at 388-4152, Sterling Starr at 652-2500, or Debbie Alke at 444-2506.

Soar High at RMC Aero Camp

Because of its overwhelming success last year, Rocky Mountain College is once again offering an Aviation Camp for students entering grades 7-11, the only camp of its kind in a four-state area, July 11-16. Classes will be Monday through Friday from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm and Saturday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm.

Campers will fly three times with aviation instructors in a training aircraft provided by Lynch Flying Service at the Billings Logan International Airport. They also will experience two training sessions in Rocky's \$100,000 flight simulator, and will learn about the diverse areas of aviation.

Instructor Erik Anderson, an airline transport pilot for St. Vincent Hospital and Health Care Air Ambulance Services, in conjunction with Lynch Flying Service, will give the campers a basic understanding of information that applies to student and private pilots.

The camp also will include: hands-on experiments with models, fun field trips, plus tours of modern and vintage airplanes and helicopters.

Rocky is offering the camp for \$375, which is half the cost of comparable camps elsewhere in the United States and includes flights and supplies; for an additional \$25, students will be provided a hot lunch. The camp is available for \$475 to those students who also need meals, lodging and after hour supervision. For a brochure or registration information, call the RMC outreach office at 657-1040 or 1041.



Mike Parsons successfully completed his oral and flight test for a Commercial Rotorcraft/ Helicopter certificate. Mike began flying in 1975 and has logged 2,000+ hours in fixed wing aircraft and states, "there is nothing quite like flying a helicopter". Mike was instructed by Dale Horne of Aquila Helicopters in Helena.

Calendar

May 21 - 22 — Nmao Int'l Airshow

May 27 - 30 — Benchmark Work Session

June 3 — Montana Aeronautics Board Meeting, West Yellowstone

June 4 — Miles City Airport Appreciation Day

June 7 - 12 — MAAA Air Tour

June 11 — EAA Chapter 57's fourth Annual Breakfast Fly-in, Laurel Airport

June 18 - 19 — Annual Father's Day Antique Fly-in, Beacon Star Antique Air Field, call Frank Bass 538-7616, more info. next month

June 25 — Plains Fly-in, breakfast and lunch

June 26 — Air Show, Johnson-Bell Field, Missoula

July 6 - 10 — Northwest EAA Fly-in, Arlington, WA

July 8 - 10 — Sixth Annual Seeley Lake Fly-in, contact Aeronautics Div. 444-2506 for itinerary and registration form

July 8 - 10 — Family Fly-in and Safety Expo, Helena

July 9 — Dutton Fun-day, Fly-in, EAA Young Eagle Rides, for info. call 476-3315

July 11 - 16 — Aviation Camp, Rocky Mountain College, Billings. Grades 7-11. Call Erik Anderson 259-5294 or John Cech 657-1040.

July 15 - 16 — Anaconda Fly-in

July 15 - 17 — Schafer Meadows Work Session

July 23 - 24 — Big Sky International Airshow, Billings

July 24 - August 6 — 15 Meter National Soaring Contest, Livingston

July 25 — Fly-in Breakfast and Little Big Horn Days, Hardin. Breakfast - 0730, parade - 1100, re-enactment - 1330. Call Bob Crane at 665-1006

August 4 - 7 — MAAA Fly-in, Three Forks

August 26 - 27 — Annual Barnstormers Fly-in, Columbus

September 23 - 25 — Montana Pilot's Association Fall Fly-in, Glendive

Frontier Airlines is Coming Back

Officials of the original Frontier Airlines which went out of business several years ago are planning on resurrecting the famous Frontier Airlines and starting up service first to several points in North Dakota beginning in July and expanding next into Montana later in the year.

Hank Lund, Chairman, President & CEO; Dan Love, VP-Marketing; and Bob Schulman, VP-Corporate Communications held a meeting at the Helena Airport terminal on April 19 to present their plans to airport managers from Helena, Butte, Bozeman, and Kalispell, Chamber of Commerce representatives from Helena and Missoula, as well as representatives from Montana's Congressional Delegation, the Department of Commerce, and the Governor's Essential Air Service Task Force, and other interested parties.

There was a great deal of interest in the Frontier proposal and a good exchange of questions and answers followed the formal presentation. Frontier Airlines had a very good reputation in Montana and the surrounding states they served for so many years.



Dan Todd, a former FAL Official renews old friendship with Hank Lund. Dan was also the former Chairman of the NTSB and is now back in Montana cattle ranching.

99s Participate in Young Eagles Program



Two of the "Young Eagles" who were introduced to the world of flight are pictured with pilot and Ninety Niner Gail Sanchez-Eaton.

The Ninety Nines, Inc. have signed an agreement with the EAA Aviation Foundation to participate in the Young Eagles Program. Participation in this program allows the Ninety Nines to conduct Eagle Flight introductory flights for students between the ages of 8 and 17.

On April 8, Montana Ninety Nine members Linda Marshall, Gail Sanchez-Eaton and Cindy Tate were the first 99s internationally to conduct an Eagle Flight.

Seventeen 7th and 8th graders from Kathy France's Anderson School science class arrived at Sunbird Aviation for ground school. They were taught a class on basic aerodynamics which included the four forces of flight, how lift is generated, use of control surfaces to alter flight path and an

introduction to aircraft terms.

The class was divided into three groups and each conducted a thorough preflight on the aircraft they would fly in. Sunbird Aviation allowed students access to a few of its aircraft.

Flights consisted of normal startup, run-up and takeoff procedures with explanations. Once in flight, students were taught basic pilotage to locate their rural school. They picked out landmarks and directed the pilots in the proper direction. In the air students received explanation of turns, climbs, descents, and see and avoid techniques.

The response was fantastic! There were four students who had never been in any size aircraft and quite a few who had never been in a small aircraft. The excitement of the students was contagious.

Approach Plate Update

(Reprinted with permission from National Association of State Aviation Officials Newsletter)

The distribution of the first 300 approach plates that will permit pilots to fly overlayed GPS non-precision approaches are scheduled for release on April 28.

The initial distribution will then be supplemented with up to 600 additional charts included in each 56-day updating of

instrument approach procedures until overlays for approximately 4000 non-precision approaches are completed. The dissemination of the charts is now possible because of two recent advances in the GPS program. The first was the declaration that the satellite system was operational and an integrated part of the ATC system, made by FAA Administration in February.

The second was the certification of the first GPS receivers capable of performing supplemental enroute, terminal and non-precision approach navigation. With the appropriate components now in place, the FAA can release the new approach plates which will be re-titled to include both the original and overlayed GPS procedure, such as "VOR 23 or GPS 23".

Great Falls MPA Hosts Barbecue

The Great Falls MPA Hangar held its annual spring meeting and barbecue on April 14 at Rocky Mountain Air located on the Great Falls Airport.

A special presentation was made to MPA member Loren Smith. Loren was the recipient of the AOPA award that was presented during the Montana Aviation Conference by Ray Costello, AOPA Northwest Mountain Region representative.

Unfortunately, Loren was out of the country at that time and



unable to accept his award. Mike Ferguson presented the award to Loren on behalf of AOPA at the hangar's barbecue.

This prestigious award is given in recognition of a person's many contributions to aviation.

Loren was the Chairman of the MPA committee that drafted and organized the strong successful lobby to increase the aviation fuel tax in the last legislative session.

The committee consisted of not only MPA members but members of other aviation organizations and FBOs.

Loren is an avid supporter and contributor to the Benchmark and Schafer Meadow Airstrip work sessions and fights to maintain and keep open these mountain/wilderness airstrips.

Congratulations Loren!

Community Meeting Being Held

Following a suggestion from the Governor's Essential Air Service Task Force, Big Sky Airlines together with its task force representatives, has organized local meetings regarding essential air service (EAS) in each of the communities served. Big Sky Airlines is the carrier that provides service to Montana's seven EAS communities.

The first meetings was held at Glendive on April 21 and received good local support. The meetings were attended by John Rabenberg, Chairman of the task force, John Kubesh, Glendive's EAS representative, Mike Ferguson, and Terry Marshall, Chairman & CEO, Big Sky Airlines.

The meeting covered general comments regarding the program, funding concerns and asked for local support of continuance of the program. Terry Marshall presented general financial and operational reports on the airline.

The following schedule exists for the re-

maining EAS communities: April 28 - Havre; May 2 - Wolf Point; May 5 - Glasgow; May 10 - Lewistown; May 17 - Miles City; and June 23 - Sidney. For meetings places and times contact Debbie Alke at the Aeronautics Division at 444-2506.

In FY 1995 the communities of Glendive, Miles City, Lewistown and Havre could lose service if Congress votes to maintain current language proposed in the administration's bill. The proposal would eliminate service to any community were the subsidy exceeds \$200 per passenger and is located within 70 miles of any hub. The DOT has stated that this data is illustrative only, as the cost and traffic data will be updated to reflect more current calculations. The task force remains in contact with Montana's congressional delegation and the National Committee of Cities and States for Airline Service (NCCSAS).

Ford Tri-Motor Scheduled

An air show at Johnson-Bell Field near Minuteman Aviation is scheduled for June 26 beginning at 0900. Evergreen International Airlines, Inc. of McMinnville, OR will be sending a 1928 Ford Tri-Motor that will be available for rides, pending upon weather. It is anticipated that several other antiques will be at the show.

The Museum of Mountain Flying is sponsoring the Tri-Motor's fuel and will be selling seats aboard the aircraft for \$175 from Spokane to Missoula or Missoula to Spokane.

For more information contact Steve Smith at 542-0148.

Senator Burns Conducts Town Meeting

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) hosted a town meeting with Senator Conrad Burns in Billings, on Sunday morning following the Montana Aviation Conference. Montana's aviation community was invited to share their thoughts and concerns on aviation related matters with Senator Burns. About 150 people attended.

The issues of concern which were discussed included FAA enforcement activities; national park overflight legislation; general aviation product liability; the airport improvement program; airport security; and unfair treatment of general aviation at some air carrier airports.



Ray Costello, AOPA Northwest Mountain Region Representative, offers his comments at the opening of the meeting with Senator Conrad Burns and David Kennedy, Director of Legislative Affairs, AOPA, Washington DC.

Aviation Accident Symposium

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) held an Aviation Accident Investigation Symposium on March 29, 30, and 31.

This 3-day industry symposium was held to critique the Safety Board's aviation accident investigation process. Major investigations and general aviation accident investigations were just some of the topics discussed and NATA staff participated in the discussions.

In one of the briefings, the NTSB outlined the NTSB Most Wanted Transportation Safety Improvements.

The aviation recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration or the Department of Transportation are listed below: Airport Runway Incursion-Provide safer control of aircraft on the ground, Mode C Intruder Conflict Alert in Terminal Areas-Install collision avoidance systems, Human

Fatigue in Transportation Operations-Study the relationship of fatigue and work/rest cycles in the transportation industry, Structural Fatigue Testing of Aircraft-Require testing of aircraft to the equivalent of two lifetimes of use, Alcohol/Drug Detection-Require uniform collection, handling, processing, and testing for alcohol and other drugs, Brake Wear on Transport Airplanes-Require improved braking for transport category airplanes.

Revenue Diversion an Issue

(Reprinted with permission from National Association of State Aviation Officials Newsletter)

Airport revenue diversion could hurt future funding of the AIP according to Representative Bob Carr, Chairman of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee.

Carr, during a subcommittee hearing on the fiscal 1995 budget for the Office of the Inspector General, noted that in fiscal 1994,

his subcommittee had called for a one-time reduction in AIP funding, a reduction to \$1.69 billion from the previous year's \$1.8 billion appropriation.

Carr suggested that either the authorizing committees should enact stronger legislation against airport revenue diversions or DOT should become tougher in its enforcement of the law.

Otherwise, he indicated that the House Appropriations Subcommittee in the future may not "be as generous." In February, a

staff investigation of 33 commercial service airports found 17 of them to have diverted approximately \$900 million in federal funds.

The DOT's Office of the Inspector General determined that the diversions were appropriate because the sponsors were exempted, accounting for \$641.3 million. \$140.8 million were identified where the sponsor's exemptions were self-proclaimed. The remaining \$111.7 million of airport revenue diversions did not appear to meet the statutory exemption.

Smokejumpers in the Northern Rockies

By: Todd Onken
USDA Forest Service

If you've passed through Missoula in the spring you may have been advised of parachute training activities by ATIS or seen smokejumpers steering their canopies to the ground. Most local general aviation pilots are aware that smokejumping—the delivery of firefighters and equipment by parachute to remote forest and range fires—is an often used fire suppression tool in Montana and northern Idaho.

This spring in Missoula the skills of 117 veteran jumpers will be buffed up. About 350 smokejumpers are employed nationally by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Of those who train in Missoula, 70 will be stationed in Missoula, 18 in West Yellowstone, and 29 in Grangeville, ID.

All smokejumpers are considered “national resources”. In an average season we Zoolies (as Missoula jumpers are called) might be sent to jump fires in New Mexico or Alaska in late May while

appropriate option. If the manager decides to have smokejumpers put out the fire, a call is placed to the dispatch office in Missoula. A siren signals 10 to 16 jumpers to “suit up” in their yellow fire and puncture-resistant kevlar jumpsuits and harnesses with main and emergency reserve parachutes. We try to be on the aircraft and taxiing out within about five minutes.

LORAN is usually used to help navigate to the fire and a spotter throws crepe paper wind drift indicators out over the jump spot. Jumpers are dropped in pairs from about 1500' AGL to steer their canopies to the selected landing area. After the jumpers are safely on the ground the spotter will push paracargo out the door which contains tools, food and water for about two and a half days of firefighting.

Smokejumpers must usually extinguish the fires they are dropped on without the use of water since lakes or creeks are not often close by. Still, with hard work small fires can usually be declared dead out within a couple of days. After the fire's out we work to make the area look as undisturbed as possible, disguising our saw cuts and filling in wide fire-control lines.

How do we get ourselves and our gear to vehicles if we're in a roadless area? Our favorite is to have a helicopter show up with a cargo net suspended on a line. A skilled pilot can lower the net to the ground next to our gear which is quickly loaded and the loaded net attached back to the line as the helicopter takes it away.

Sometimes we're directed to leave our gear next to a trail for a packer to pick up and haul out with his stock. Our least favorite method of getting our gear out is to pack it out on our own backs. This requires that each jumper carry 90-110 pounds of gear, sometimes for miles cross-country just to get to a trail. The worst packout that I've heard about was something like 24 miles and took two days. But hey! we hired on to be tough.

I've averaged about ten jumps to fires each season of my career. Each year I've been delivered to an additional two or three fires by truck or helicopter. Our job is to fight fire regardless of how we get there. But most admit that delivery by parachute is the most exciting way to begin a fire assignment. Our main parachute is a 32' diameter round canopy that is deployed automatically by a 15' static line attached to the plane. It has about a ten mph forward speed and a 15-17 ft/sec descent rate. That gives us roughly a 1:1 glide ratio.

Our jump aircraft are presently all twin-engine turbine fixed wings. From Missoula we'll often fly in a Basler-converted turbine DC-3, a C-23A Sherpa (the military version of the Shorts 330), or a Beech King Air 200. Rounding out the smokejumper air fleet in the northern Rockies are two DeHavilland Twin Otters, one each stationed in West Yellowstone and Grangeville.

While I have this audience I must make a plug for air safety. Our operations are interesting to watch from the air, but please give us lots of room if you see us dropping a fire while you're flying. Our flight patterns are not always predictable when we're trying to watch our wind drift indicators or drop paracargo. A mid-air collision is a kind of excitement we'd like to live without.

“Smokejumpers must usually extinguish the fires ... without the use of water since lakes or creeks are not often close by. Still, with hard work small fires can usually be declared dead out within a couple of days.”

Montana's getting spring rains. Then we reassemble in mid-July as the Southwest and Alaska receive their seasonal rains and things start to burn in the northern Rockies. We've sent Zoolies to the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia in February, to the Lake States on Easter Sunday and to South Carolina in November.

Last year we didn't jump a single fire from our Missoula base because of the unusually cool and wet summer—a first in our 54 year history.

Various national forests, national parks, and other state and federal agencies which manage the wildlands in the northern Rockies call and order smokejumpers to work on specific fires.

These fires are usually one of two kinds—either newly discovered fires in remote areas, or “emerging” fires which continue to spread despite the best efforts of firefighters working to suppress the fire. Once a land manager decides smokejumpers will be used our job is to stop the fire from spreading and put it out while doing as little damage to the natural resources as possible.

Based on my 13 years of experience, here's an example of a typical smokejumper fire mission: A lookout tower or air patrol observer finds a new source of smoke. The observer radios in the location and other relevant information about the fire to the responsible agency. If the fire's in a large wilderness area where it could be allowed to burn, the area manager will decide whether that's an

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Orville Baer Butte
Dale Klugman Helena
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Bill Winninghoff Helena

ASOS Update

Two more Automated Surface Observations Systems (ASOS) have been commissioned by the National Weather Service in Montana - Havre and Glasgow.

The telephone numbers to access their weather data are: Havre 265-6638 and Glasgow 228-8294. In addition to the normal surface data that you will receive, density altitude is also given.

If you need any further data or information, please contact Bob Sims at 453-2081 at the Great Falls Weather Office.

Thanks Jim!

Montana Livestock Ag Credit, Inc. would like to announce the retirement of pilot, Jim Rice, and congratulate him on 15 years of excellent service. We will miss Jim and are looking to replace him with a pilot experienced in multi-engine and Cessna-340 flying.

NOTICE

The Deer Lodge Airport now has a functional USWest telephone located on the field.

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